

THE POEMS OF
LUCILE DU PRÉ



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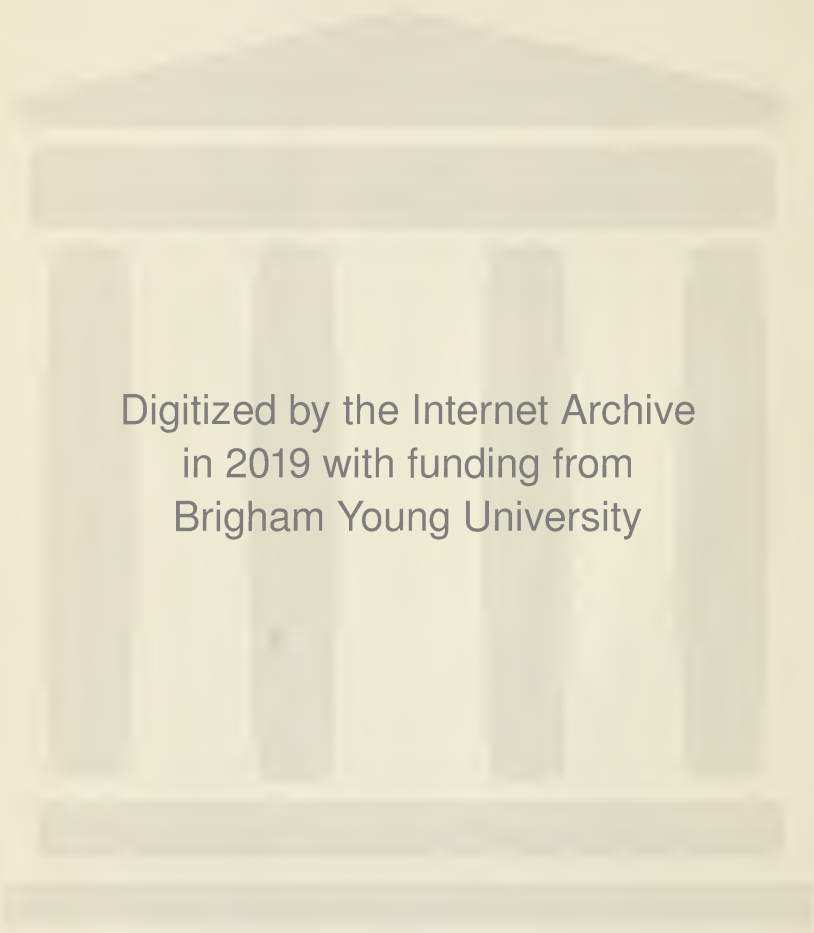
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ERRATA

Page 19, fourth line from bottom —

for "*to life*" read "*to lift.*"

Page 75, third line from top —

for "*the light*" read "*thy light.*"

POEMS OF LUCILE DU PRÉ



LUCILE DU PRÉ

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P O E M S
OF
LUCILE DU PRÉ

With an Introduction by

KATHARINE LEE BATES



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BOSTON

1923

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FOREWORD

THE author of this book it was never my privilege to meet in the body, but I gladly pay homage to the spirit here revealed. The biographical sketch written by the poet's close friend tells of long labor and eager aspiration baffled, the promise of a brilliant career suddenly cut off. Upon a violinist, rarely endowed and elaborately trained, illness laid, at the very threshold of triumph, the hand of imperative arrest. But there was "the high code." Not adjuring music, like the broken-winged lark of her lyric, she turned from those enchanting strings, whose magic she had mastered, to poetry, not for lamentations, but as a new outlet for the surging waves of rhythm that possessed her soul.

Only here and there, as in the poem on Jacob Stainer, violin-maker of the seventeenth century, does the frustrated vocation peep out, and then with

a gallant rather than grieving look. The love poems, too, are of love unfulfilled:

*"Forever we were but a breath,
But a word or a look apart;
You waited too late, well-beloved.
Death knocked at my heart."*

But these "silver pinions" lift even death to a divine adventure:

*"I will not fear this space,
Chaos, nowhere to cling!
On outspread wing,
Dauntless and clear I sing,
Lonely I seek thy face."*

The religious note in these poems throbs from the patient faith of His Voice Calls through the holy passion of Easter Even to intimate communion:

*"Loosen these bonds that I have tangled so,
Lift Thou my brother's burden that I could not bear!
Master, I can but worship, can but know
That Thou wilt pray for me and be my prayer."*

The poet's fine culture reaches beyond the Greek, even beyond her adorable Hermes, The Shep-

herd of Stars, and his mother, Maya Compassionate, to the ancient thought of India. Her delight in nature goes singing all the way from "white-wreathed orchards" and the "robin's lordly call" to shining Sagittarius of the seven arrows. The Celtic spell has touched her, too, and all through nature she hears "the wild call of Faerie." But the range of her sympathies is widest of all, embracing not only Saint Gedula but the pagan priestess of Flamma Vestalis, not only Judas Iscariot but lonesome little elves.

*"We have no elfin motherling
To sing when sunlight dies,
To kiss us when the church bells ring
And star-dew stings our eyes."*

This volume is as a small flask of precious ointment, quintessence of a beautiful life.

KATHARINE LEE BATES.

I.

SAINT GEDULA

CIRCE

Men call me "Wise King Ulysses;"

Along these coasts of oak and pine,
Which hoard red honey for the bees

And sweet grass for the fattening kine,
They prate still—they be simple folk—

Of deeds of prowess long since mine,
Our home is free from phantasies,

Eros hath shown great mercy.

Friends meet here at our year's decline,

"No traveler now our Ulysses;"

They chat and drive afar the swine,

Whose presence doth breed maladies.

Whence comes that magic jasmined breeze

Again—sweet quivering mysteries

From yon blue isle of sorceries

Echo a laugh divine!

*The looms of twilight wove her hair,
Her voice was violet breath;
To hold her were a god's despair,
Her flower-kiss was death;
Oh Circe, Circe!
Strange sea blooms on her bosom lay,
(Snow o' the foam most bitter sweet)
I could not bear what men would say,
I tore my coward soul away
From love, immortal, glorious.*

Nay, now no more of memories!
Penelope's dear hand in mine,
We count these drunken humming bees
Athwart the swinging cypress vine,
Her slave girls bring quaint tapestries
With song and perfumed wine.
*Echoes of booming faerie seas
Crash down the long coast line.
Eros, have mercy!*

*No spell she wove, that deathless maid,
Yet each brute soul shook horribly;
We were of all men's shame afraid,
Her strange voice stung and scorched and flayed,
Through some relentless melody.*

Oh Circe, Circe!

*Her deep eyes shone above her prey,
They huddled snarling at her feet,
Held by those sea-fraught eyes at bay;
Her flooding voice that bade me stay
Yet throbs with each heart-beat.*

*Gods, for a storm to life this gloom—
To fling me to yon azure room—
To sweep forth this wild sea perfume—
Have mercy, Eros!*

The thyrsus on my heart was laid,
A deep resistless mystery.
Mid taunting, wind-flung mockery
I held my course—I chose the way
Of weariness and slow-drawn breath
For this poor form which perisheth;
By haunting shadows undismayed
Here will the King greet hoary Death!
Go little errant waves, to stray
And curl about her feet!

SAGITTARIUS

Seven were the arrows

 In the fairy hunter's quiver,

 Given by the Siddhe

 Ere they went away from men;

Strength and joy and craft and courage,

 Songs to praise each giver,

 Patience with the quarry—

 Yea, and pity for the slain.

Yet never sped his shafts of light

 Across the gulfs of æther,

 The clanging of his hunting horn

 The Siddhe heard no more;

Forgetting and forgotten

 Dreams the hunter by a river

 Brimming with the tears and mirth

 Of all the days of yore.

FOR EACH

The sky for the bird whose wings
 Beat through the morning air,
The sea for the strange sea-things
 That know nor joy nor care;
You for my soul that brings
 Such thoughts, that the still air sings
The magic of myriad springs
 Around you—about you—above—
 From the Infinite Heart of Love!

THE TORTOISE

"As he stepped over the threshold of the high-roofed cave, he found a tortoise there, and with the shell and with the reeds cut to measure, he fashioned a lovely plaything; at the touch of his hands it sounded marvelously."

From the Homeric Hymn to Hermes.

Earth and sky were void of meaning,
Without thought or voice or impulse to aspire,
Till you came, oh Wingèd Spirit,
—Till you came—
Morning-eyed in mystic splendour
With your wand of waving flame,
With your lightning striking chaos to desire.

There in nothingness I drifted,
Dumb, unlovely spawn of ocean's slime and shame;
Then you came, oh Music-Maker;
—Then you came—
And you stooped to lift me higher
With the touch of spirit fire,
While your voice of molten glory shaped my frame.

First fire-bringer from far heavens,
Leading, stirring, guiding, lashing tongue of flame!
Out of darkness you have brought me
Fashioned me and softly wrought me
To an instrument joy-giving,
—Hermes Lyre—
Dowered with your inner wisdom
And a voice of mist and fire,
Now I echo back your thrice-majestic name!

“K A R M A”

Deep in her house of death
Dreaming I found her;
Knelt and prayed fervently
Rose and unbound her.

Mâya Compassionate,
Star of the Sea,
Now in thy house of Life
She hath forgotten me.

Thou who art heaven's breath,
Thine be her liberty;
Bound in the house of death
Still I pray steadfastly.

THE ELF COAXES THE LADY

Be patient, dear, and I will find you
a flower, so sweet—so sweet that you
Will be glad that you waited;
Do not mind if these torn hands have bruised it,
And look never behind at the little red marks
of my footsteps in the deep-gathered snow
Of the forest.

You will laugh when the drops of my heart's blood
have turned into bright gleaming berries—
You and the shy dark-eyed squirrels
Need plenty of berries each winter.
Or wait, dear, and I will weave you a love-song
as closely as bird-nests are woven,
Guarding their well-hidden treasure.

Be seated and watch with kind eyes
while my fingers, long-skilled in such labor,
Fashion a poem of gladness
With soft-curving delicate phrases;
As deft and as fleet are my fingers
as ever the wings of the swallow,
As gay and as bright are my fancies
As the breast of the oriole in April.

But do not look back at the shadows
or notice what lurks in the branches
Or slips through the scattered leaf driftings;
See, all that is needed I've gathered—
Now the joy of the weaving together!
Look, dear, at the song nearly finished—
As light as the meadow lark's music,
As pure as the breast of the snow-bird.

Why are the deeps of your eyes close-curtained as
twilight?

What have I done with my singing

That shook back your soul into silence?

You gather your long cloak about you

And pass through the woods as a stranger;

Around me the eddying leaves are whispering slyly
together,

Above in the storm-tossed branches

the nests are deserted, forsaken;

My flower—my berries—my poem!

THROUGH FOLDED NIGHTS

Through folded nights
And blossomy days
We think on His most gracious ways;
By sun and moon
And keen star-rays
And Easter Lily mysteries,
How shall His own
Shine forth His praise?

BRIDAL SONG

Awake! awake with the April swallows,
The meadows yearning, the forests bare,
The streams returning by hills and hollows
To earth as an answered prayer!

Arise, arise! by the snows' redeeming
The springs are filling, the orchards white;
Arise, for thine eyes that have ceased their dreaming
Are thrilling with new delight.

Rejoice! rejoice that thy heart is flinging
Her portals wider than earth or sea!
Rejoice, for the voice of thy soul is singing
Aloud in her ecstasy!

II.

THE SHINING LIGHT

BY A HILL STREAM

Ever the stream
Glistens and darkens in mystical measure,
 Alternates pauses and flight
With sudden cool silences, marking a theme
Beyond understanding, yet hinting of treasure
 Past hoarding or spending;
Guarding the secret in runes of delight
 Overwoven with rhythms unending.

Slowly the rushes
Caught in mid-current, swaying and swinging,
 Endlessly to and fro,
Drift where a delicate willow-wand brushes
Over the torrent of waters, low-singing,
 Laughing with mirth,
Splashing and spraying the mosses that grow
 Close to the sweet-smelling earth.

Quiet, the pool
Dappled with shadows of Time's steady flight,
Holds in each multiple gleam
The colours of opaline dawn, sweet and cool,
In sun-tinted, star-glinted circles of light;
Hesitant ever,
Yet bringing and flinging them deftly, the stream
Weaves daylight and darkness together.

Echoes of Heaven,
Float the pale colours of soft fading skies,
Evermore distant and lonely,
The deep diapason of pine trees at even
Chants of the Spirit while star-tapers rise;
Stillness is best:
The voice of the silence is music heard only
When hearts are at rest.

I walk in shadows snow-crowned,
Along these ancient temple-walls
Soft echoes fall down and the sound -
Of alien Music calls,

Alone I dream through misty days
And pallid nights - afar from those
New throngs of priestesses whose praise
Hounds to their God - Who knows?

There are these altars ever more -
Long ages since our gods are flown:
None worships by this temple-door
But I alone.

I will be faithful to the end
But Oh - if this God Christ should be -
I pray Him for my heart's first friend
Whom hath forgotten me.

FLAMMA VESTALIS

I walk in shadows, sorrow-crowned,
Along these ancient temple walls;
Soft echoes follow and the sound
Of alien music calls.

Alone I dream through endless days
And pallid nights—apart from those
White throngs of souls, whose Christian praise
Ascends from where their altar glows.

Dark are my altars evermore,
Long ages since my gods have flown;
None worships at the temple door
Where I abide alone.

One must be faithful to the end;
Yet—if their Saviour-God should be,
I pray His peace for my heart's friend.
—Zeus hath forgotten me!

JULY

The larch tops tremble against the sky,
Shimmer and sway in their own delight;
Far out where the feathery branches lie
The still blue air burns white.

ELF - SONG

They promised me a little Harp,
A Harp of gold with seven strings:
I who was free a fairy child
Sat covetous with folded wings—
I who had danced with Northern Lights,
And known the song the South Wind sings
Of ecstasy on ecstasy!

They gave a human name to me
I have forgotten. Day by day
Echoed their words of *Love* and *Fame*,
Of *Hope* and *Fear*, till far away
Rang the wild call of Faerie,
And o'er the dreaming hills of May
I fled from their captivity.

THE FIFTH WIND

Oh the wonder and power of the Fifth Wind!
It gives the breath and motion to the sea-waves,
It pushes on the slowly moving rivers,
Gently it presses on the feathery shadow-grasses
And circles the ample forests.

And when into the wide field of the sky
We step far past the blue rim of the years
Leaving every wall of clay behind us,
Poised and unafraid we shall stand waiting
For the coming of the Fifth Wind.

Even now at any open window
While we watch the dawning-hour holy,
Soft-petalled, rose-flushed, light-suffused,
Something better than earth's best is blown in to us:
We are flooded with the strength of the Fifth Wind.

SAINT GEDULA IN THE FOREST

"Saint Gedula is often represented on her way to the Church of Moorzecla, in her right hand a candle and her left a lamp, which demons endeavor to extinguish."

Among these moon-white, strange, enchanted flowers,
So fraught with longing is their magic breath,
Those who forget to keep their torchlight burning
Might stray forever here, forgot of death.

Where is the Guide who saves us from dream-mad-
ness?

(Each chalice of these flowers holds despair)
This moonlight drowns the soul in waves of passion
And stops the keen vibration of white prayer.

Were there no waking world beyond the forest
Still is my heart forevermore a shrine,
Where neither dream mists nor these pale enchant-
ments
Can quench the inner radiance that is mine.

THE RIVALS

So thou hast sought my Lady's heart,
Tyrant Death!
Caught and tamed till it dare not start
And tremble when I call, Love saith.

What wouldst Thou with her shimmering hair,
Miser Death?
Treasure enough hast Thou to spare
This my living gold, Love saith.

Four white doves are her hands and feet,
See, oh Death!
There are no lotus buds more sweet,
But they rest too still, Love saith.

This I know, that her love is mine!
Hear, Oh Death!
That have I for my part divine,
Take Thou the rest, Love saith.

THERE IS A PAINTING

There is a painting by a friend of ours,
So like your writing. How shall one explain?
Strange veils of mist and fog blow through these
 bowers

And tangled long threads of rain;
The drenched spent flowers lie drowning,
So meek—for all their pride—beneath the praying
 pines

Who lift austere strained arms in vain.
No human heart dare bring compassion near,
No mortal hands could push the fogs aside;
—What if a star might enter very clear,
With mirth for shadows, joy for light denied
And for dead flowers, frankincense and myrrh?
None hides from star-light, for a star dreads none—
Both night and day Love's miracles occur,
And day or night the stars guide every one,
Taking no toll beyond the right to serve
Star fashion, free, obedient to God's Will
That uses each for good, that grants each prayer.
Oh very Dear, the star knows not of earth, or any ill,
Or loss or gain, but loves still everywhere.

GOD LETS ME HELP HER

God lets me help her
And my soul spreads wings
Strong and protecting, clean as mountain snow,
Fleet for love's tireless toil;
Singing I cross the plains and forest fir,
Praying I pass the sea of man's turmoil
Pouring out songs of gladness, note on note.

God lets me hurt her
And I quench the spark
Of human love that blinds my heavenly sight;
Back to our God I fold these wings of night,
Hush the pure music welling to my throat.

EASTER - EVEN

He walketh the starry spaces,
He climbeth the awful heights,
 Oh follow Him—follow Him on!
Forgotten the mad earth-faces,
Forsaken the sad earth places,
Unbound from the earth's delights
 He goeth beyond the dawn.

But now He was here among us,
Our earth and sea at His feet;
 Oh where hath the Master gone?
Strange were the songs He sung us,
Precious the gifts He flung us,
And the look in His eyes was sweet
 As the look of the skies at morn.

We dreaded His wild sweet dreaming,
And His voice that our souls adore
 Now silent since yestermorn;
For need of His love far-streaming,
And the love-light of His eyes deep-gleaming,
That thrilled to our Hearts' dark core,
We wait by a cross forlorn.
Oh follow Him, Brothers, follow Him,
 Follow Him evermore!

III

THE ELF EXPLAINS

THE FOREST OF MÂYA

Would you know the forest of Mâya?

Come with me there at twilight
When the stars first glimmer
 through its solemn aisles,
And the moon leans wistfully
 across the pale cloud bars
To light the forest depths.

In that wood I know
 better than the house-holder knows his home,
Better than mine own soul,
 no mortal foot has pressed the sweet wild grasses,
No earthly hand has pushed aside
 the waving veils of purple shifting mosses:
Scarce heavier than festoons of woven gloom
 they droop and sway along the forest aisles,
But darker they are—and heavier—
 than the nebulous shadows
That pass all the night long
 down vistas remote and intangible
As the devious ways of the dream world.

In the heart of the forest a pool shines,
fed from a hidden spring;
Ferns and little star-eyed mosses
grow thickly to its edge,
The tall sprays over-arch the dimpling water,
whose tiny circles all reflect
The spreading circles of the trees above them,
From the overflowing brim
A limpid stream goes whispering
with tender murmurs, unintelligible
Until one has seen the face
reflected in its shining mirror—
The face of the Lady of the Forest.

Here at eventide,
with the last bird notes over-head
And the breath of white violets about her feet.
She comes to the quiet pool
That even in its dreams the night-long tells of her.
Lonely and happy, being Joy herself,
Over the lapping waters she leans singing:
Velvet-throated is she, so that the wood-dove
Leaves its dear nest for love of her strange songs;
The little restless stream waits silently,
Trembling and treasuring her golden-throated music
as human hearts echo and re-echo
The voice of the beloved.

Through dusky garments, silver-threaded,
woven of glistening moon-beams and of shadows,
Gleams out the clear perfection of her body
parting the darkness like a star.
She shakes the purple iris and the fern-wreath
from the dim splendour of her hair,
And when the veils of twilight are withdrawn
she will descend into the quivering pool
To lie at ease among the water-lilies
in the white fire of the risen moon,
Lulled by the bubbling murmur of the pool, spring-
fed,
the endless rush and flutter of little forest winds
And the deep slow breaths of night.

All day the pool has kept
the color of her eyes;
Now it is black as ebony,
surging and circling
Against the water-lilies
and against the silver radiance of her breast.
She is safe-folded from the light of waking worlds,
a secret hidden in the dream
Which I have dreamt and shown to you
while we two wandered
Within the magic woods of Mâya.

A CREST OF THE WAVE

A crest of the wave upblown
Is my brother the bird overhead
And ever the sea makes moan:
I have heard what the Sea Mother said
All day in a monotone.

THE BERRIES

Oh remember but the berries,
All the little red, red berries
Hidden clustering in their covert
By the sweet and patient hill,
Glistening, twinkling, with the dew-drops
Clinging to their elfin faces,
Nodding, trembling in the twilight,
Innocent of good or ill.

Do they tremble at some stirring
In the dim protecting twilight
Which enfolds them cradled happily
Upon the dear hills' breast?
Does the mighty life tide surging
Lift them from their seedling playground,
And the call of conscious being
Breaks their long pre-natal rest?

FAILURE

I called your name once soft and low,
That only you might make reply;
I heard my voice fall quietly
Along the air waves' endless flow
As dead leaves drift in undertow,
And you passed by.

Then through mine eyes I called to you,
And waited prayerful as fields lie
Thirst smitten knowing they must die
Without the blessing of the dew—
So stricken, Love, I looked on you
Yet no reply.

Oh then I clamored with my soul
Against your soul, and mightily
I felt the thunderous thought waves roll
And break against your heart, the goal
Of my poor life's futility.

And so you answered to my will
What you refused my love; and I
With love unutterable still,
Could wish you free again, so ill
Love brooks captivity.

ANCIENT FAITH

Oh ancient faith returned again,
Thou pearl of perfect loveliness,
For thee no church, no outer fane!
Upon thy scrolls are names we bless,
The heroes that our hearts possess,
Inscribed without a stain.

Within their lives the Presence grows
And fills them as with precious wine—
Wine of the Spirit. He who knows
This vintage hears not "mine and thine,"
But freely, gladly, as wind blows,
Pours forth for all the gifts divine.

THE ELF EXPLAINS

Yea, we dread the boom of church bells
And the sight of sudden crosses:

Long ago some shining foot-prints
Were left gleaming in our garden,
Then a tiny window opened
And a light beamed high above us,
He of whom we speak not, think not,
Leaned forth calling us together,
All the small forgotten people;
Magic sang behind his music—
How we hurried, wee feet twinkling,
Loose heels clattering, tip-toes squeaking,
Among the roots, along the caverns;
Some were weak with bubbling laughter,
Some were pucker-browed, perplexed
With the puzzling talk of problems
Of the harvest-days approaching;
Deep young eyes like fringed gentian
Gazed, forgetting their vocation,
All their happy work of weaving
Moonbeams through the oak and olive,

While a voice like golden harp-tones
Showered words upon us waiting:
"Little people, little people,
You who shake the leaves all spring-time,
Guide the vines and wreath the tendrils,
Bind the ice upon the rivers,
Dip each flower in varied fragrance
And who keep the birch a-quiver,
Would you stay here softly working
Or come with me and be mortals?"
Suddenly a sparrow tumbled,
Fluttered to our swift protection;
Shrieked for our sweet ministrations;
So we elves forgot to answer.
We remained to tend the sparrows,
We are happy with the woeful.
And we show the misbegotten
Some bright things like opals shining,
And we stir among the grey locks
Of the bad forgotten women,
And we fan the smoking brier
For the old man long-neglected.

But we dread the boom of church bells
Or the sight of sudden crosses.

LET ME GO FREE

Let me go free! The morning sunlight flings
Abroad its glory, every pulse-beat sings
With every bird on bough
For every joy of living—Ah not now
The thoughts of sacrifice and binding vow!
Listen, the faery winds! Wild roses blow,
Scenting the hill-side where the great hawk wings
His splendid way of freedom. Let me go!

The voice is stilled. The evening shadows fall
Fold upon fold, each ashen, and a pall
Covers the face of the Beloved at rest;
Too late I turn for refuge to the breast
Unfailing until now. Broken my will,
Like rose-leaves drifting; vagrant breezes call
From where the death-hawk hovers by the hill.

JACOB STAINER

Jacob Stainer, violin maker, died in the poor-house at Absam in 1683. He was adjudged mad because he wandered all day long in the forest sounding the pine trees for their key-notes. This is a prison-song to his violin.

Rose of the world I have found you!

Your summons I understood,
Listening and toiling and praying
Deep in the ancient wood;

Rose of most perfect beauty
Released from your prison, the pine,
Ransom of freedom and reason
I yielded to make you mine.

Of colour and sound was my vision,
Pure is your tone as a flower;
Though in your place I am captive,
You are dowered with beauty and power.

I mind not the world's derision;
In this prison your songs divine
Are making the mad-house a heaven—
Rose-voice of the world, you are mine!

IV.

SILVER PINIONS

JUDAS

I lie outside thine ancient gate
Oh Mary-Mother hear!
I have forgotten love and hate
And aching hope and fear—
Yea, very patiently I wait
Through rounding year by year.

The winds of Heaven winnow me,
Men pass and disappear;
I drown not in Thy scornful sea,
Thine earth disdains to cover me,
Thine ice and fire flee my bier
Yet faith bides steadfastly.

I brake thy holy Mother-heart
And how should'st thou bend near?
'Tis meet that thou set me apart—
Yet One still holds me dear!
Soon Christ will call "Iscariot"
And I "Lord I am here."

SILVER PINIONS

Silver pinions flying by,
Circling down this pallid sky
 Now far—now near,
How requite thy minstrelsy,
How repeat thy wizardry
Changeless through the changing years!

No mortal longing knows
The way the Fifth Wind blows—
 Oh fair and fleet!
Free as the sky or sea
Float songs of ecstasy,
Voice of gold and silvery flying feet.

THE SHEPHERD OF STARS

Beneath thy death-white magic wing
Hermes, Oh Hermes!
Thine own disciples live and sing;
Around us mightier planets fling
Vain lights from alien skies.

Far overhead thy glory gleams
Hermes, Oh Hermes!
To us thy silvery radiance streams
Real in a world of fleeting dreams
Where all else fades and dies.

Guide of a myriad quick and dead
Hermes, Oh Hermes!
We know thy love's protection spread
As light along the path we tread
Across these empty skies.

Beyond the mists of blinding tears,
Past human woe, past mortal fears,
Slowly we follow through the years,
Slowly we rise
Oh Hermes, Hermes!

HIS VOICE CALLS

His voice calls ever through our silences,
He knows our pain will cease;
Trial by fiery love is of the Master
And when He wills it, peace.

RHYMES

Ho, dancing Rhymes in airy dress
Of fancy's flying phantasies,
How many times your fleeting chimes
Ring out to fling us happiness!

Bright elves astride these whirling words,
Ye ride gay-bridled humming birds
With double wings—a sweet surprise—
Or are your steeds twin butterflies?

Float by! We neither know your name,
Nor why you go nor whence you came,
Yet some of you are caught—unwise
Sky visitors, shy butterflies!

COMPENSATION

Every queen, every slave, sullen or fair
Has a mate to love—save one—
Has a lover a mate, her shield her fate,
But I who am sweet have none;
Yet for me love gleams on the morning seas
And breathes from the noon-day pine,
And the rose-flushed heart of the evening sky
At the close of the day is mine!
Oh lovelier ones need I envy now
Your rose-red joy, your mirth?
Naught to you is a star-pale brow
Until it has mixed with earth.

THE COMMAND

In the beginning we struggled and wandered,
Long æons we breasted the fathomless deeps of de-
sire
Until from the sea-girdled bosom of Mâya The
Mother
Most Holy, we dreamed (was it only a dream?)
Of a voice of Compassion that thrilled through the
waters of sorrow
And bade us her sea-spawn, unseeing, unthinking,
For something we know not lift upward our hearts
and aspire.

THE LARK

When the sun is high and the lark afloat
On wings of joy in the morning sky,
He pours forth songs from his perfect throat
And he knows not why.

When the moon goes by and the stars are cold
And the lark is caged with a broken wing,
He may live or die with his wrong untold
But he will not sing.

FAR - FLUNG

I had no hat so I took my crown—
The silvriest thing with a magic rim—
And I tossed it far where the white Pole-Star
Is regnant over our earth's old moon.

The blue mists rose till my age long foes
Could crawl from the swamps of the ancient fen,
And the hurricane came of iron-wrought frame
And I crept to the door of the Mother again.

The Mother was weaving her children's dresses
From millions of torn leaves heaped on her knee,
And her eyes of compassion that saw beyond vision
Were bent on the tattered bright leaves and on me.

She knew of my loss, my treasure soft-gleaming,
Far-flung to the giver—adrift in the sea—
She brought me my bow and the gay golden quiver,
She bent down the ages and bade me go free.

THE SWAYING TREE-TOPS

The swaying tree-tops and lilac branches
And opening violets hail the Eastern Door,
And long-hushed laughter shakes the morning glories
Holding some mirthful secret of the days of yore.

The white-wreathed orchards and upland meadows
Receive the mountain's message from the West,
And men and flowers and star-eyed worlds unnum-
bered
Are folded in the evening's heart of rest.

THE NEOPHYTE

Rose-dawn Glory of the world, sublime and tender,
Surely comes Thine hour holy when all's well—
For the morning star of Heaven, swinging slowly,
Calls to worship ringing clearly down the crystal
skies!

Still the moment tarries and our hearts lie breaking
On Thine Altar of the East where darkness dies.

Thy libations drench the world and sky with splendour,

Torn asunder are the shadow-gates of hell
And the death-mist parting leaves the bare soul
shaking—

Life and Death are one, Thou Lord of joy in Sacrifice!
Hail triumphant! Now a myriad souls surrender—
We have seen our Lord of Light and Love arise.

V.

THE HERMETIC HYMN

THE HERMETIC HYMN

*To know, to will,
To dare, and to keep silent.*

The light is on each morning's sea

Hail Hermes!

Thy music measures forth our days—

The unknown glory of thy ways;

We must obey for love of thee;

Take thou our wills, naught else have we—

These echoing harp-strings break. Set free

We look up to thy Sun and say

“Hail Hermes!”

Thou art too wonderful for praise,

Hail Hermes!

Oh comforter of lonely tears,

Shepherd of rainbow-haloed years,

Thy silence gives the sense of thee.

We would obey to learn thy ways,

To know and guard thy secrecy,

To will and dare thy mystery—

Thy peace, Lord Hermes!

THE BUTTERFLY

The Butterfly hath spread her wings
Of elves' device and heraldry—
This is the first of all the springs
For her beneath the April sky;
Wistfully to the Rose she clings—
Ah butterfly, fair butterfly!

How is it when the North Wind sings
His thin ear-piercing lullaby?
These be strange garlands Winter brings
To cover graves where roses lie—
Dead drifting petals, withered wings
Ah butterfly, frail butterfly!

THE RAINBOW

The storm raged till the day was spent,
A cold wind lashed the bitter sea;
Said Hate "I will not rest content
Till God is judge 'twixt her and me."

The first flush of the day-dawn spread
In amber ripples o'er the sea,
A rainbow path to Heaven led;
"God's peace" Love prayed "twixt her and me."

PRAIRIE CHANT

Miles upon hundreds of miles of billowy fields of
alfalfa
Enfolded with infinite calm, undulating forever and
ever,
A stillness in glorious motion; the song of the si-
lence arises
The chant of the Earth-Mother mounts to the Lis-
tening Ones.

Her prophecy floods every day-dawn,
Her sunsets spread banners of triumph,
Her sweetness and strength make the noon-tide.
Her breath is the deep peace of mid-night;
With the freedom of endless horizons
She moves in her green and gold mantle.
Hers is the secret of ages,
Of cycles of wisdom forgotten
The stars to the Chaldeans told it,
The Sphinx in her silence proclaimed it.
Low-bent at her loom in the darkness
She changes corruption to verdure,
Content she weaves shadows of substance
To serve in the courts of creation;
From her knees the majestic processions
Move on through the many-roomed mansions—
From seedlings to stars they mount upward
The white Milky Way to the Great One.

THE DAY WANES

The day wanes and the light grows dim,
Cloud flowers of the west
Drift to the sunset's brimming rim,
And stars sing low their vesper hymn
And earth gives thanks for rest.

THE HIGH CODE

Her thoughts that go so straight and far
Past silent star and singing star,
Flashing light softly overhead
This station of the waiting dead.

Selfless each message, gay as the sun;
Moon-sweet, star fleet, true, so none
Of life's malicious dreams can be—
God guides her work thus steadfastly.

As pine breath sweet, as mountain snow,
Her thoughts gleam as the four winds blow;
God gives her the un comforted,
Frozen of heart and restless dead.

THE POEM

Within my heart in the still grey space
We know when our eye-lids close,
I saw an unborn Poem's face
Sweet as a small white rose.

"I pray you let me pass" it said,
"Into the world of men;
Thy brow will be so garlanded
That thy heart will forget her pain."

Within my heart in that strange grey place
—Waiting—with outstretched hands,
For never now will its prayer find grace,
My little white Poem stands.

THEY SAY HE LIES ASLEEP

They say he lies asleep
Beneath the sedge grass where the sea-winds sweep
In widening circles through the wistful night;
And armies fighting pass and clear stars creep
With steadfast gentleness across the sky.
I wait and watch the sea-gulls' lonely flight—
Men dead or living know not how we weep,
God will not let us die!

VOICES

Love, how the linden murmureth!

Thou hearest this and not my cry?

Sweet and cool is the forest breath—

Cold and sweet is the kiss of Death,

Mine Own!

Fair are the young leaves over-head,

Last year's leaves are beneath thy feet,

If one might hear what the breezes said!

If one might rest among the dead

Alone.

Love, look up at the glad New Year!

A year may hold a man's despair—

High overhead our skies shine clear.

Look not back lest the Past appear—

Our own!

Clouds are coming across the sky,

Thou, not I, wilt have storms to fear,

Clouds but pass as in days gone by;

Storms will come and the fierce winds sigh

And moan.

What is this that the winds repeat?

Words we spoke ere our year had flown.

Why are thy red lips pale, my Sweet?

Because thou are mine and thy light heart's beat

Is still mine own.

UNDERSTANDING

Forever we were but a breath,
But a word or a look apart;
You waited too late, well-beloved,
Death knocked at my heart.

And now that I leave not your side
The word—or the look to divine,
I know that your love undescried
Was my life—Heart of Mine!

VI.

THE STILL LIGHT

WHY DOST THOU SMILE

Why dost thou smile, oh Dreaming One!

Close nestled at my knee?

A silvery star-path red in the sun!

But what is that to thee?

On my white road a white bird sowed

Seed of a tall black tree.

Oh downy brow, why frownest thou,

Why catchest thou thy side?

My brothers tread a pathway red

Dreadfully far from me!

The heavy load—the sharpened goad

Under the dark tree's leafless bough—

Mother, can such woe be?

THE RELEASE

My lady hath built of her thoughts a tower,
 (Love lies waiting in wild sedge-grasses)
Barriers of dreams she hath made for her bower
 Where Time like a sentry passes.

She faces the gales of the Past, eyes wet,
 (Salt o' the sea far-flying, stinging)
Love from the heart of a white violet
 Looks forth low-singing.

She hath hidden her window with tapestries,
 (Love leans guiding a rose cloud-prow)
Fear and close-folden grey phantasies
 Shroud her white brow.

Her tower hath never a drawbridge way—

But Love is re-weaving one
Of warm breast-feathers and rainbows gay,
Of glittering tears from the years far flung,
By a myriad thoughts and prayer-threads hung
High above worlds astray.

Like a wild eagle, Love the true lover,
Strives with the storms of her yesteryear;
Drives through the clouds till the stars uncover
Dawn, and the wide sky clear!

My Lady hath chosen the mystic way,
(Happily Love leads on)
Shining she goeth in Love's array,
Sure as the joy of earth at day
My Lady hath followed her own star-ray
Straight to the hidden sun.

LOOSEN THESE KNOTS

Loosen these knots that I have tangled so—
Lift Thou my brother's burden that I could not bear!
Master I can but worship, can but know
That Thou wilt pray for me and be my prayer.

FLEET, SO FLEET

Fleet, so fleet
That my footsteps left hardly a trace,
I fled over the desolate hill of snow
To the house of the well-beloved in the evening glow.
I made me a prayer to the Lord of all Love that we
 know,
And I sang out of rapture that he had so given this
 grace,
That her cry in the silence had brought me
Across all that stillness and space
To bring laughter and peace to her face—
 Sweet, so sweet.

Still so still
That I loitered and listened in fear—
Row upon row the mountains were kneeling in prayer,
The clouds of compassion hung low in the clear
 stinging air
And each star as it broke through the dusk was a tear,
The prairie wind blew like the wind of the sea
And I whispered "White Glory of Loving grant
 courage to me!
'Grant courage to battle this presage of ill
'And swiftness to follow thy will."

ELF SONG

What are those things that mortals see,
Why go they bowed with care?
We scurry by them hurriedly,
Their tears we will not share.

The dried leaves fall from every tree,
The new green leaves were fair—
Aslant we see them tremblingly
Drift down the evening air.

We have no elfin motherling
To sing when sunlight dies,
To kiss us when the church bells ring
And star-dew stings our eyes.

Above there is great shepherding
Of stars steadfast and wise,
While free from flower to flower we swing
And jeer with mocking cries.

No thoughts of men we understand,
Such faith and oaths they swear!
We've flitted over sea and land
And change was everywhere.

SONNET OF COURAGE

As when against the ocean's wrath one rows
Singing through gulfs of death, so valiantly
Each one's deific will from chaos grows
To strength immortal, ruling sea and sky.
Little he reaps who in the sea-field sows;
We will sow thoughts as stars, flinging them high,
Death disregarding; God within each knows
The harvest-time of peace and victory;
Failure and triumph, life and death proclaim
This faith divine—We sons of God aspire
Freely to keep inviolate His flame—
This moaning ocean shall be Hermes' Lyre!
Shepherd of stars and men we chant Thy name
Among a myriad swinging worlds of fire.

THE FORGING

The Master toils by the anvil fires
At the white-hot core of the earth;
He is making a song to the anvil-beat,
The flames and the vapours wreath his feet
And the smoke of the world's desires.

He shapes and he breaks at the burning pyres
As he forges for death or birth;
His Life for our lives in the fierce white heat—
And the look in his tender eyes is sweet
By the forge at the heart of the earth.

THE STILL LIGHT

The sun and stars have dropped away,
 Have dropped away like human tears;
There is no breath of coming morn,
No echoing of yesterday,
 No hopes—no fears.

Chaos waits motionless, forlorn,
 The pulsing of the Mighty Breath
Sunken to rhythms æons slow;
The will-to-be is deep indrawn
 Past life and death.

Still brooding over endless space
 Where nothing is—below—above,
Beyond where dreams of gods may go
Remains the still light on the face
 Of Love.

POSTPONEMENT

So drenched with tears our love has grown,
 So soon our love must die;
We may not claim it for our own
 Beneath this changing sky;
We can but suffer each alone
 Know it and pass it by.

Tall lilies blow in Paradise;
 Look up, Most Dear, and see
How fair and fairest to our eyes
 Love waits for you and me—
Not lost but Heaven-kept for us
 Safe in Eternity.

THE GIFT OF THE ROSE

Gold dust of the Yellow Rose,
Deep hidden wealth in wisdom's mine!
Men have forgotten, so none knows
Aught of thine ancient rich design.

Flush Dawn-Rose, a loving cup
For pledge of faith from earth to sky,
Dew-filled to brim is lifted up
Expectant of Thy victory.

Even the wide heaven-floor
May not the Red Rose-glory span,
Blood of the sacrificed heart's core
Shed by the Son of Man.

Breath of fair thoughts of His mind,
To poet-children wing-and-wing
Float White Rose-perfumes, sweet and kind,
And rest upon the songs they sing.

VII.

WINGS OF FLAME

THE SUMMER DAY

The Song of Summer fills the air to-day

With peace through prayer made perfect; all last
night

The yearning forest prayed against the sky

With arms uptossed by tempests, till the dawn
Grey-eyed and sweet, with trailing draperies,

Crept softly to the woods with torch alight
And flung the fire of sunshine on the trees!

All nature feels the rapturous delight:

The woods new shriven sing for happiness,
Joy glistens from innumerable leaves,

Joy pierces through the robin's lordly call,
The dew drenched grasses whisper of content,

And meditative bees in monotone
Muse loudly of their wealth from clover fields.

Time troubles not these placid forest glades
With devastating touch, but they are stirred
By musical far-wandering little winds
Piping their way down hazy distances,
Laughing along the innocent small leaves,
Curling the fronds of exquisite pale ferns
With breaths of summer sweetness blown astray.

The quiet pulses of the day have passed
The splendour of the lengthening afternoon;
Among the tender murmurs of the leaves
Full weary little winds caress the feet
Of sleepy birds on slowly swaying boughs,
Till past the sunset on the purple hills,
Enfolded in deep peace, the twilight comes.

KUEN - LUN

He dwells they say at Kuen-Lun,
He whom all men would look upon,
His arms laid by the battle won;
Between rose-dawn and setting sun
What light remains in Kuen-Lun?

Is it some village of the snows
Or hidden city old and strange
Or high peak of the higher Range
Or shepherd's hut the ewe lamb knows?

My heart dwells evermore on this—
He knows each swift thought-sacrifice,
The woe we gave returns our bliss.
There is this thing to think upon—
They say the gods built Kuen-Lun.

I WILL NOT FEAR THIS SPACE

I will not fear this Space
Chaos, nowhere to cling!

On outspread wing,
Dauntless and clear I sing,
Lonely I seek Thy face.

WINGS OF FLAME

With eyes of fire and wings of flame
Into my heart one day Love came,
Crowned as king of my heart's desire.

Swift as the daydawn, unaware
Yet unsought of my heart's white prayer,
Love's breath blew on my heart's still fire.

With wings afold and eyes downcast
Out of my heart one day Love passed;
Cold my heart where the ashes lay.

"Nay," I said to my heart's despair,
"Love's voice silenced my heart's white prayer—
Best for my heart Love went his way."

FORGOTTEN FIRES

The silent fountains of Castalia
Scatter no more their tinted spray;
The blue mists rise no more at Delphi,
The swans of spring have flown away,
The light refulgent of those first dawns
Breaks only now to common day.
Oh, for that morn when Dionysus
Smote Heaven's fire from earthly clay!

THE GUARDIAN'S VOICE

I am old with the woes of my helpless; you pray and
you slay in your praying!
The barriers built up between you—the prisons
wherein you are starving—
The palaces, hovels, oppressions,—yet daring to ask
for His coming.

Should He come, would you know Him I wonder?
Within and without is the PRESENCE
But lift up your eyes and behold Him—His look in
the eyes of the loving,
He waits in the hearts of your brothers rose veining
of thought within matter.

For never the archangels choiring before the Most
Holy of Holies
Can touch the white robe of the Master can feel the
compassion incarnate
So closely as you in your sorrow so keenly as you in
repentance.

Forever the spirit illumines—but lift up the veil of
your vision,
The seven-fold veiling of spirit and know that the
radiance holy
Spread lavishly crimson and golden from the heart
to the verge of creation
Is the dawn of to-day—in your keeping.

SHINING MYSTERY

I float between the sun and moon,
Soft wrapped in shining mystery;
The earth life bruised my fluttering wings
So these more fleet were given me.

Star lilies fill this sky lagoon
With breath of heavenly ecstasy,
And night and day and glorious noon
Are here but one vast symphony.

THE GIFT

Had I the power to make, Beloved,
Your dearest dreams come true,
Woven of hues of fairy land
Gleaming with fire and dew
As sea shells tinted—as rainbow-spanned,
Perfect each hour anew—
These were not beautiful enough,
Beloved, for you!

A white fire lives within my heart—
Hidden from outer things,
No mortal longings enter here,
No stir of fairy wings,
The cadenced thought-waves disappear
Until the Silence sings—
This gift (not mine to give, Beloved)
No human lover brings.

UNDINE TO THE EARTH-CHILD

What do they matter—right or wrong,
Joy or grief, or that curious fire
Wild as the winds of the hurrying sea
Men call desire?

I instead of a soul am a song,
A restless breath of the ocean-lyre;
Your earth-born thoughts are naught to me
Or your hidden fire!

The tides out there where the phosphor gleams
Hold the sea and the earth apart.
Why do you blame me then? It seems
That you have been fashioned to doubt your dreams
And I without a heart.

DEATH SONG

Oh prophecy of ecstasy,
Dream realized but now!
Was this the lovely brooding thing
That sang low from each lilac bough,
That rang so clear through calls of spring
Presage of all that Life might be?
Ah, Breath of pure dawn-melody
Blown sweet upon my shroud,
You herald gladder wakening
Than ever earth allowed—
At last to know why planets sing
Their choral song of mystery!

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